(c) what steps would be taken to avoid creating hazardous conditions in railway coaches;

(d) the full details of such plans; and

(e) the plants to encourage a debate on such un-tested ideas?

THE MINISER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (e) Action is in hand to enhance the capacity of existing 3-Tier sleeper coaches from 72 to 81 berths, and to manufacture future 3-Tier sleeper coaches to a new design with capacity of 84 berths. The increase in the capacity of existing 3-Tier sleeper coaches is being made by provision of a foldable middle berth in each longitudinal bay, while the future 3-Tier sleeper coaches shall have three extra berths on the transverse side by adjustment of the width of transverse bays besides the provision of longitudinal middle berths. The design and fitment details for the new arrangement for both the existing and the future coaches have been finalized with due consideration to passenger comfort and safety.

Accident on unmanned level crossings

1299. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that unmanned level crossings on the rail system have been taking a good toll of human life every year;

(b) whether Government proposes to address this problem through awareness campaign and other means;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what are the details of rail accidents that had taken place on unmanned level crossings during 2006-07 on the ECoR?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU):

(a) to (c) The number of accidents at unmanned level crossings and resultant loss of human lives in such accidents is a matter of concern for the Indian Railways. Indian Railways have been taking a number of steps including public awareness programmes and publicity campaign to educate road users for observing safe practices while negotiating unmanned level crossings such as quickies on TV, cinema slides, posters, pamphlets, advertisements in newspapers and on local cable network, street plays, talks on radio, counselling the road users through SMS and had also been involving the village panchayats to address this issue. Joint ambush checks with the involvement of civil authorities to nab the erring road users under the provisions of Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 and the Railways Act, 1989 are also conducted.

In addition, besides providing smooth surface and appropriate gradient at the level crossings, proper road signs to warn road users, speed breakers/rumble strips on the approach road, and whistle boards for the train drivers to whistle while approaching the level crossings are also provided. Further, the level crossings gates are being progresssively manned in a phased manner on their qualifying the prescribed traffic volumes. Zonal Railways have also been delegated adequate powers to consider and sanction Limited Height Sub-ways in lieu of level crossings, wherever feasible, to reduce the number of unmanned level crossings.

Emphasis is also being given for closure of sparsely used unmanned level crossings suggesting their merger with another crossing/Road Over Bridge/Road Under Bridge in close proximity where the traffic can be easily diverted.

(d) Details of unmanned level crossing accidents on East Coast Railway during 2006-07 are as under:

Sl. No.	Date	Division	Block Section	Train No.	Brief Particulars	Casualty	Cause
1.	4.5.06	Sambalpur	Loisingha-Balangir	8005	While the train was on run one tractor dashed against the train	Killed-3	Negligence by road users
2.	5.7.06	Khurda Rd	Malatipat-ur-Puri	Rath Yatra Special	While the train was on run one Car dashed against the train	Killed-1 Injured-6	Negligence by road users
3.	25.11.06	Sambalpur	Mandirhar sud-Lakholi	8426	While the train was on run one Car dashed against the train	Killed-2	Negligence by road users

Election by secret ballot under supervision of department of labour

†1300. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether secret ballot for giving recognition to union is being conducted under supervision of the Department of labour as per order of Supreme Court;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether exemption has been sought from Court?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. There are no such orders from Hon'ble Supreme Court.

(b) and (c) The Hon'ble High Court Madras and Hon'ble Supreme Court had directed to determine the exclusive membership of Railway employees for the recognition of unions through secret ballot on the pattern of Food Corporation of India election which were conducted under the supervision of Chief Labour Commissioner. However, while discussing modalities for holding of elections, a decision was taken by Ministry of Railways not to involve Ministry of Labour for supervision of conducting Secret Ballot. No exemption from Court was necessary.

Increasing the passenger amenities at stations

†1301. SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:
SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.